



# VESTAL FIRE DISTRICT

1136 Front Street, Suite 01  
Vestal • New York • 13850  
Phone: 607-797-2756  
[www.vestalfiredistrict.org](http://www.vestalfiredistrict.org)

**Board of  
Fire Commissioners**  
David Harrington  
Daniel Kirchheimer  
Thomas McCartney  
Keith Purdy  
Mark Tomko

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## Special Board of Fire Commissioner Meeting Agenda February 11, 2026.

1. Present: Thomas McCartney, Chairman  
David Harrington, Commissioner  
Mark Tomko, Commissioner  
Daniel Kirchheimer, Commissioner  
Keith Purdy, Commissioner  
  
District Staff: Susan Bowen, Fire District Secretary  
Paige Willes-Brown, Director of Purchasing  
Marisa Butler, Fire District Treasurer  
Clay Ellis, Director of Communications – Absent  
  
Others: Chuck Paffie, 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief  
Kahl Miller, 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief  
Steve Langeland, 4<sup>th</sup> Assistant Chief  
Robert Hamilton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant  
Don Albrecht, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant  
Ed Hildebrand, Dept Rec. Secretary  
Leslie Chrysler, FirstNet Rep.  
Chris Hutchings, Smith Brothers  
Nick Spencer, Smith Brothers  
Patrick Quinn, McNeil & Company
2. Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Commissioner McCartney
3. Commissioner McCartney led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes - None
5. Correspondence Report - None
6. Bid Openings – None
7. Scheduled Appointments (Guests)
  - 7.1 Leslie Chrysler – Prime Communication AT &T FirstNet
    - FirstNet is a government-funded network with dedicated Band 14 and priority access for public safety. AT&T can deploy cells on wheels (COWs) during major events/disasters to maintain connectivity
    - The district uses FirstNet phones; eligibility extends to paid staff and volunteer members. Proof of affiliation is required (badge or chief's letter).
    - Plans offer unlimited talk, text, data, hotspot; pricing is \$47/month for the first line with “in family” discounts on additional lines.
    - Conclusion: District members (paid and volunteer) qualify for FirstNet with special pricing and prioritized connectivity; Leslie is the primary contact.
  - 7.2 Smith Brothers - Nick Spencer and Chris Hutchings, McNeil & Company - Patrick Quinn
    - The organization is navigating a volatile, high-cost insurance market by leveraging strong performance and proactive risk management. While facing industry-wide premium hikes of 30-50% and soaring repair costs, the organization achieved a remarkable 0 claims and limited its own premium increase to just 7%, demonstrating the financial benefits of its



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strategic initiatives, such as adopting vehicle cameras and investing in training. This strong foundation allows for detailed policy adjustments and new investments, though significant coverage gaps, particularly in cyber liability, remain a key concern.

- Action Items:
  - Recommended scheduling “Beyond the Sirens” (~1.5 hours) covering response priority.
  - Continue phased camera installation; target 2027 exploration. Prepare and submit written summary of camera program to underwriter.
  - Revisit Fred Singer facility coverage
  - Notify insurer upon sale of old Station 4.
  - Commissioner Kirchheimer to confirm if IT vendor (Pyramid) provides ransom insurance. Review IT contracts for hold harmless risk; Commissioner Kirchheimer to provide contracts.
  - Review deductibles for Auto and Portable Equipment; consider changes only if savings justify.
  - Pennsylvania Mutual Aid Coverage - Obtain written confirmation and legal review of cross-border coverage.
  - Commissioner Purdy to analyze valuations and thresholds on the Vehicle Schedule.

8. Operations Report – Chief Paffie (or Designee) - None

9. Department Business Report – President Eaton (or Designee) - None

10. Station Reports (Fund Raiser/Special Events/Member Requests - None

- a. Station 1
- b. Station 2
- c. Station 3
- d. Station 4

11. Membership (New and Current)

11.1 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to approve Giovanna Seaver as a new member of Company 4.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

12. Commissioner Report - None

- a. Commissioner McCartney – Administrative/Policy
- b. Commissioner Harrington – Financial/Records Management/Quality Assurance/LOSAP
- c. Commissioner Tomko – Training/Safety Programs/Fred Singer Training Facility
- d. Commissioner Kirchheimer – Facilities/Information Technology/Physical Security/Human Resources



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e. Commissioner Purdy – Asset/Equipment/Fleet Management

13. Director of Communications – Clay Ellis

None

14. Secretary Report – Susan Bowen

14.1 Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Tomko for Secretary Bowen to attend the PERMA 2026 Annual Member Conference at Tuning Stone Resort in Verona, NY on May 13 to May 15. Lodging rate \$289 for one night as the second night is covered by PERMA. Conference fee is waived for the primary contact upon registration. Mileage reimbursement for personal vehicle.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

14.2 Commissioners review 2025 LOSAP Points with changes that were noted by Secretary Bowen.

15. Elections (Annual or Special)

16. Treasurer Report – Marisa Butler

None

17. Approval to Properly Audit and Pay Claims as Submitted

17.1 Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Tomko to approve the Audit and Claims for 2025 Expenses (Accounts Payable) dated February 12, 2026, in total amount of \$629.74.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

17.2 Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to approve the Audit of Claims for 2026 Expenses & Encumbrances dated February 12, 2026, in total amount of \$281,897.94.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

18. Director of Purchasing Report

18.1 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Kirchheimer to approve the following members to attend National Foam Fluorine Free Foam Global Firefighting school from March 31, 2026, to April 2, 2026, at the TEEEX Fire Field in College Station, Texas. Travel Dates will be March 30, 2026, and April 3, 2026.

- Assistant Chief Charles Paffie
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Walter Rochester
- Firefighter Alana McKeon
- Firefighter Jason Chernyak
- Firefighter Jonah Carlton



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- Firefighter Ryan Scarangella

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

18.2 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to approve to spend up to \$25,000 on purchases needed for Foam School:

- Class Registration for 6 firefighters: \$11,495. (6<sup>th</sup> person free of charge)
- Hotel Stay- 4 nights, 5 days: \$110 a night for 4 nights for \$440 for 6 rooms at an estimated cost of \$4,000
- Flights: Round trip for 6 passengers for an estimated cost of \$4,500.
- Shipment of Turnout Gear: Checked bag fees: est. \$500
- Airport Parking (if applicable)
- Meals will follow GSA per Diem rate for College Station-\$2,700
- Enterprise Car Rental-estimated \$700 for 4 days
- Tolls
- Any additional incidentals

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

18.3 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to approve Asst. Chief Charles Paffie to be assigned as the group leader following the group for Foam School and designated as a debit card holder for the Vestal Fire District for the purpose of Lodging and Travel Expenses. A Debit Card Authorization Form will be completed before the event.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

18.4 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Kirchheimer to approve the following updates to 2025 Encumbrances:

A3410.410	Witmer Associates (theFireStore)	Majestic Fire Gloves	\$1,433.71
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A3410.410	Morris-Croker LLC	LION Legend Helmets (Black & Red)	\$2,488.20
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Total amount of Encumbrances: **\$170,256.58.**

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried



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18.5 Motion by Commissioner Tomko, seconded by Commissioner Kirchheimer to approve Chief 32-2 Monthly Mileage Report from December 17, 2025, to January 28, 2026.  
All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

18.6 Request by Purchasing Director Willes-Brown to table the request until the February 25, 2026, meeting.  
Request to approve to write a check in the amount of \$950 to be given to Dustin McCartney to deliver to Lighthouse Electric & Property Maintenance for the purpose of running electric to the training TVs at Station 1. Vendor requires payment after work is completed.

## 19. Resolutions

19.1 Resolution 2026-003 In the Matter of approving the 2025 certified points for LOSAP. See Resolution attached to these minutes.

## 20. Policies and Procedures

### 20.1 Review Application Process

- Reviewed original application process sent early January, and second revision sent at the end of January. Second revision includes red strikeouts for deletions and blue for additions.
- Commissioners will send the draft to FAB for feedback (FAB meeting on the 2/16) referencing discussion with Assistant Chief Paffie and copying John. Document remains draft; iterative improvement planned.

## 21. Unfinished Business

### 21.1 Physical Program Update and Communication

- Misstep in a meeting presentation was addressed via commissioner guidance to each station; feedback received and questions to be answered. No change to the 2026 physical program; voluntary optional assessments explained for occupational health. Considering voluntary gym memberships for interior/exterior firefighters in 2026 (not budgeted); potential department-wide memberships in 2027. Emphasis was placed on metrics and evolving physical/fitness program.

## 22. New Business

### 22.1 Discussion and approval to purchase health insurance for fire district employees.

- Need to approve purchase of health insurance; Prior approval allowed up to \$800/month.
- Healthy New York EPO quote for employee earning less than \$54,000: single coverage \$696/month (\$8,352/year); employer must cover at least 50%; options from 50/50 to 100% coverage. Dental/vision not yet quoted; potential to add within \$800/month budget.

Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to purchase the proposed Healthy New York EPO for district employees and to cover 100% of the premium cost of \$8,352.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried



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## 22.2 Discussion on replacing a Chief Response Vehicle Project

- Plan to pursue funding for a second chief's vehicle via permissive referendum (capital reserve); draft wording sent to attorney for review. Target permissive notice period: March 2–April 1; public notice in paper (not ballot).

## 22.3 Discussion on UTV Project

- Intent to fund two UTVs totaling \$120,000, including skid units and one enclosed trailer. Qualified mechanic to assess UTV 2's remaining service life due to age. Permissive language to remain broad without specific model numbers.

## 22.4 Discussion on Rescue 32-2 Change Order

- Overweight issues on M2/M3 prompted re-evaluation. Ford F-600 (22,000 GVWR) insufficient; GM/International CV (23,500 GVWR) didn't resolve capacity; Freightliner M2 4x4 (36,000 GVWR) addresses compliance.
- No increase in length; new drawings for station fit; compartment changes to be reviewed; tires moving to 12R22.5 high axle for all-weather response.
- Stakeholders, Company 2 Committee reps and Chief Stout support the change order to go with the Freightliner M2 4x4

Motion by Commissioner McCartney, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to move forward with the change order to switch to Freightliner M2 4x4.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None.  
Motion Carried

23. Public Input Session – None

24. Announcements - None

## 25. Executive Session (if needed)

25.1 Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to go into Executive session at 8:22 p.m. to discuss the resume and employment history of an individual which may lead to his or her employment.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

Motion by Commissioner Kirchheimer, seconded by Commissioner Purdy to exit the Executive session and resume the regular meeting at 8:57 p.m.

All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

No action was taken from the Executive Session.



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## 26. Additional Business

26.1 Commissioner McCartney discussed that he will be attending the Western Broome Chief's meeting Thursday night and will be bringing two letters to that meeting, one for support of the Fred Singer Training Facility and one for funding opportunities. All commissioners voiced their support for Commissioner McCartney to move forward with attending the Western Broome Chiefs Meeting. No motion was made.

26. Motion by Commissioner Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Tomko to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. All in favor: McCartney, Harrington, Tomko, Kirchheimer, Purdy Opposed: None Absent: None. Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Bowen  
Fire District Secretary